

# Project Update Newsletter No. 2

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Fall 2004 Haleakalā National Park

### Summit Area Transportation Management Plan/EA

## Project Status

The National Park Service began a study of transportation and management options for the Summit District of Haleakalā National Park in 2003. Meetings with stakeholders and the public were held in April 2003 to identify issues and concerns with current conditions along the road to the summit and at the major visitor destinations. Meetings were also held with Native Hawaiian Kupuna to discuss issues relating to the sacredness of the summit area. Data were collected and visitors were surveyed in December and January 2003/2004 and again in July 2004 to gain an in-depth understanding of how visitors use the park.

We have identified four preliminary alternatives (including a No Action alternative) to improve visitor experience and protect the special resources found in the Summit District. These alternatives respond to the issues we uncovered during our meetings and the information gathered from surveys and other data collection activities. This newsletter contains highlights of the information collected during our research and a summary of the alternatives that we plan to evaluate.

We need your help to chart the future of one of Maui's most important places and popular visitor destinations. We have scheduled meetings where you may provide comments on the alternatives or ask questions about the data that has been collected. If you can't attend one of these meetings, this newsletter describes other ways that you can participate in the planning process. Please take advantage of these opportunities to help us improve visitor experiences at Haleakalā National Park.

A public meeting will be held in Pukalani at the Mayor Hannibal Tavares Community Center Hall at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, November 10, 2004. We look forward to seeing you there or hearing from you by phone, mail or electronic mail.

Aloha,  
Don Reeser, Superintendent

## What We Have Learned

The Summit Area Transportation Management Plan covers the 11-mile portion of the Haleakalā Highway (SH 378) corridor within the National Park boundary.

Sunrise is by far the most popular time to visit the Summit District. On the survey days up to 27 bike tour vans and more than 100 other vehicles were parked at the Haleakalā Visitor Center and Red Hill near the summit. An estimated 590 people were at the Haleakalā Visitor Center (HVC) and 225 people were at the Red Hill Summit at sunrise. More than one in five visitors to the HVC before 8:00 am felt moderately or more crowded. More than one third of the visitors surveyed at the HVC before 8:00 am saw more people than they think the park should allow.

After viewing the sunrise, most early morning visitors head back down the mountain. Another visitor peak occurs at around noon, but visitors spend less time in the summit area at this time, resulting in less crowding. The highest volume of traffic entering the park (94 vehicles in one hour) was recorded between 3:30 and 4:30 am on July 12.

Members of Native Hawaiian Kupuna Groups on Maui indicated that the sacredness of the Haleakalā summit area is diminished by too many people visiting the site, and opportunities to conduct cultural practices in peace are limited.

Most bike tour customers responded that they enjoyed their visit, but 48% thought that the number of people at viewing areas was a small problem and 9% thought this was a big problem. More than 60% of bike tour customers surveyed thought that seeing the sunrise and starting the tour from the summit of Haleakalā were very important parts of their visit. Visitors reported that they most enjoyed the scenery and least enjoyed the cold weather and clouds. Many suggestions for improving the experience were offered by visitors. These ideas will be considered as the details of the alternatives are refined.

# Preliminary Alternatives

Alternatives have been developed to respond to the following issues:

1. Visitor Crowding and Overflow Parking
2. Visitor Safety
3. Protection of Native Plants and Animals
4. Protection of Native Hawaiian Values

## Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative

This alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It serves as a baseline for comparison and involves no changes to existing conditions other than already programmed improvements. All action alternatives will be compared to this alternative.

*Each of the action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4) include cultural and natural resource enhancement; enhancement of visitor orientation, education, and inspiration; elements to encourage visits by Maui and Hawaii residents; and determination of and management to appropriate levels of visitor use.*



## Alternative 2: Management-Focus

This alternative involves few physical changes to the park and no new facilities. Improvements would be made through changes to operations (i.e., open the visitor centers earlier) and would be intended to spread user demand over the day and possibly limit use during peak times if needed to protect and enhance visitor experience and resources.



## Alternative 3: Facility Enhancement

This alternative includes most of the elements in Alternative 2 and adds new and redesigned facilities. New roadway pullouts would be added to enhance safety and provide viewing opportunities. The entrance station would be redesigned to improve efficiency and safety and the Headquarters Visitor Center would be redesigned. Summit viewing areas would be redeveloped to better accommodate large groups while focusing use in previously disturbed areas. A limited number of new trails and picnic facilities would be included. Improvements to keep visitors on trails and out of sensitive areas would be provided.



## Alternative 4: Shuttle System

This alternative includes most of the elements of Alternative 2 plus a shuttle that would operate from a staging area (or areas) outside the park to the summit. This alternative would eliminate some or all private vehicles from the park during peak hours (sunrise to mid-morning) and would include some enhanced facilities including redesigned viewing areas and reconfiguration of existing parking lots to accommodate the shuttle.

## Ways You Can Participate

Schedule	Planning Activity	Public Participation Opportunities
Spring 2003 to Summer 2003	<b>1. Set the Stage for Planning:</b> The first step was to lay the foundation for everything that is done in the plan. Statements of park purpose and significance were reviewed to ensure that everything we do is consistent with the reason that the park was established. Issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the plan were identified.	The first public meeting and workshop was held on April 10, 2003. Thanks to everybody who attended! The first newsletter was issued in May 2003.
Winter 2003 to Summer 2004	<b>2. Gather Data and Develop/Analyze Alternatives:</b> The NPS planning team spent a few months gathering data about how visitors use the summit area. This included a road inventory, traffic counts, a speed study, parking data, and visitor experience surveys. Based on this data, the team developed three action alternatives (and one no-action alternative).	Public input was gathered from park visitors through surveys. Surveys included interviews of visitors exiting the park, interviews of bike tour customers at meal breaks and surveys of visitors at the Headquarters Visitor Center, Haleakala Visitor Center and the Red Hill Observatory. Kupuna group meetings were held in March 2004.
Fall 2004 <b>We Are Here!</b>	<b>3. Analyze and Refine Alternatives:</b> The NPS planning team will meet with the public, Native Hawaiian Kupuna groups, park staff, and stakeholders to review the alternatives and identify refinements. The alternatives will be evaluated to determine their environmental, economic, and visitor experience impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in public meeting on November 10.</li> <li>• Read and comment on newsletter 2. See below on options for making your comments.</li> </ul>
Winter 2004 to Spring 2005	<b>4. Publish Draft Summit Area Transportation Management Plan Environmental Assessment</b> The <i>Draft Summit Area Transportation Management Plan EA</i> will be published for public review. Public comments on the draft will be accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in meetings.</li> <li>• Review and comment on the <i>Draft Summit Area Transportation Management Plan EA</i>.</li> </ul>
Spring 2005 to Fall 2005	<b>5. Publish Final Summit Area Transportation Management Plan Environmental Assessment</b> Based on public comments, appropriate revisions to the draft will be made and a <i>Final Summit Area Transportation Management Plan EA</i> will be developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in meetings.</li> </ul>
Fall 2005 and Beyond	<b>6. FONSI and Plan Implementation</b> If no significant environmental impacts are identified, a <i>Finding of No Significant Impact</i> will be published and the park will begin to implement the improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit the park to see the improvements.</li> </ul>

## Written Comments

For those of you unable to attend public meetings, or prefer to respond by mail, we have provided a mail-back comment form. Please take the time to jot down your thoughts about the alternatives. All of the information we receive will be used to refine and compare the alternatives to develop the best plan for Haleakalā.

For general information see:

[www.nps.gov/hale](http://www.nps.gov/hale)

Send comments to:

Haleakalā Summit Area Transportation Management Plan EA  
Haleakalā National Park  
P.O. Box 369  
Makawao, HI 96768

Telephone calls are welcome:

To record your comments on the plan, please call 808-572-4400 to leave a message.

Comments can also be sent to:

[frank\\_baublits@nps.gov](mailto:frank_baublits@nps.gov)



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Haleakalā  
Summit Area  
Transportation  
Management Plan/EA

**Public Meeting to  
Review Alternatives**

*Wednesday, November 10,  
2004 (7:00 pm)*  
Mayor Hannibal Tavares  
Community Center Hall,  
Pukalani, Maui

